

James W. Scobee Farm
County Route U
Florida Vicinity
Monroe County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1219

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MO-1219

JAMES W. SCOBEE FARM

Location: 0.6 mile northwest of the confluence of the Middle and South Forks of the Salt River, 1.2 miles south of County Route U, about 3 miles southwest of the intersection of Route U and State Route 107 in Florida, Monroe County, Missouri.

USGS Florida 7 1/2' Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 15.599820.4370120.

Present Owner: United States of America, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District (August 1978).

Present Use: Vacant. Located in the Clarence Cannon Dam & Reservoir Project.

Significance: The James W. Scobee Farm provides good, though somewhat atypical, examples of farm structures and layout in the "Little Dixie" region of east-central Missouri. The house plan has expanded and contracted through the years as a result of successive remodelings. Unlike most other farm groupings in the area, the barns and pens for larger animals are not located to the side or the rear of the house, but across the road in front of the house, because the ground slopes away behind the house toward the river.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1880-83.
2. Architect/builder: James Scobee.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The James W. Scobee House is located in the southwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 7, Township 54 North, Range 8 West. The following references are from the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Monroe County Courthouse, Paris, Missouri:

1872 Warranty Deed, April 21, 1872. Recorded in Book 4, page 339. Dudley V. and Jane E. Inlow to Stephen Scobee. 124+ acres for \$2430.

1880 Stephen Scobee died in early January, and the property on which the house sits was transferred by inheritance to James W. Scobee.

- 1902 Warranty Deed, March 14, 1902. Recorded in Book 54, page 3. James W. Scobee to Julian O. Robbins. 235 acres for \$4500.
- 1920 Warranty Deed, February 28, 1920. Recorded in Book 81, page 96. Julian O. and Elizabeth Robbins to James T. and Cora B. Painter. 270 acres for \$1700.
- 1928 Trustee's Deed, August 31, 1928. Recorded in Book 89, page 186. James T. and Cora B. Painter by Trustee, L.L. Utterback, to Benjamin Utterback (Deed of Trust March 3, 1920). 270 acres for \$1000.
- 1970 Will. Recorded in Book 153, page 53. Benjamin Utterback to his wife, Dovie A. Utterback, and his children, Manly and Calvin Utterback and Anna Sue (Utterback) Mercer.
- 1975 Warranty Deed, April 15, 1975. Recorded in Book 171, page 282. Calvin and Amy Marie Utterback, Manly and Edris Utterback, and Anna Sue and Robert Mercer to the United States of America. 270 acres for \$84,000.
4. Original construction: Stephen Scobee died in January 1880, leaving his property to his son, James Scobee. Between 1880 and 1883 the younger Scobee built a one-story, two-room, central-hall house. Constructed of heavy frame members, the house had 9' ceilings and no loft space. The original flooring consisted of 6"-wide, tongue-and-groove boards. The original roofing consisted of wood shingles. The original wall fabric was plaster over hand-riven lath. There was no front porch; a large limestone block was used as a step at the front door.
5. Alterations and additions: The first addition to the house was a porch along the west side of the house, reached from the inside through the central hall. Perhaps at this time, a bedroom was added at the northwest corner.

The Robbins family bought the property from James Scobee in 1902. It was most likely during the eighteen years the Robbins owned the house that it grew to its maximum size. Assuming the porch and additional bedroom were already constructed, Robbins added another bedroom still further to the west of the previous bedroom addition, a kitchen to the west of the rear porch and a partially enclosed porch on the rear of the house (west side, covering three fourths of the wall). A front porch with a flat roof was probably also added at this time. The west porch on the original house was enclosed on all but one side (the south), which was screened.

In 1928 the farm was sold by the Painter family, who had lived on it since 1920, to Benjamin Utterback. Lamar Utterback, Benjamin's son, "modernized" the house in 1938. With the help of Howard Tanzey, the tenant farmer who had lived in the house with his wife since 1929, Utterback tore off the additions west of the original structure and partitioned it into four rooms using interior stud walls. A porch formed the southwest corner of the house. The original ceiling joists were lowered, decreasing the ceiling height in the first-floor rooms, and a half-story room was built over the northeast room. The ceiling joists in the south half of the house were removed entirely and replaced with newer boards. The hall was converted into a stair-hall. The space under the stair was divided into closets--a pantry for the kitchen and a smaller closet for the right (north) front room. The first floor of the "new" house contained a bedroom, living room, dining room, kitchen and porch. The second story contained a bedroom and attic storage space. The earlier flat-roofed porch on the front was replaced with a low-pitch, gable-roofed porch.

Alterations during this last phase included the replacement of weatherboards, the application of concrete over the limestone foundation, the finishing of the newer interior walls with plaster-board and plaster, the replacement of window frames, the laying of new floor boards over the originals, and the construction of a new chimney flue. One of the last alterations was the removal of the front porch.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the House:

James Scobee was a farmer in the Salt River country, continuing a tradition established by his father, Stephen Scobee, and his grandfather, Robert Scobee. This particular line of the Scobee family in America begins with the immigration of John Scobee from Scotland to Virginia, where one of his sons, Robert, was born in 1775. Robert moved to Clark County, Kentucky, and married Elizabeth Brohard. One of Robert's sons, Stephen, continued the family's westward migration by moving to Monroe County, Missouri. Stephen took possession of a number of acres of land, including some near the confluence of the Middle and South Forks of the Salt River. His son James, who inherited this land, shared a similar family history with many second generation farmers in Monroe County, beginning with migration from Europe to the Tidewater states, and continuing with moves into Kentucky and Missouri. Along with the movement of families came the transfer of cultural traditions, including building types. Such forms as the double-pen house built by James Scobee closely link this region of Missouri with the Upland South.

The Scobee Farm provides a good instance of the continuity of agricultural practices in the area. Cattle, horses, and sheep have been raised continuously from the time of James Scobee in 1881 until the time of the Tanzey family in the 1940s. Similarly, the crops raised by the later families (with the exception of later crops such as soybeans) are crops which have been raised in the area for a century or more. Corn, oats and hay have been the major crops, with personal preferences accounting for the planting of cow peas (Painters) or sugar cane (Tanzey's).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None located.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary Sources:

Henderson, Mrs. Frances, Florida, Missouri. Telephone conversation, August 25, 1978.

Land Assessment Records, 1875-1884. Office of the County Clerk, Monroe County Courthouse, Paris, Missouri.

Painter, Caskie, Paris, Missouri. Personal interview, August 18, 1978. Mr. Painter is the son of James Painter, the third owner of the house. He provided information on the farm in the 1920s.

Personal Property Assessment Records, 1881. Office of the County Clerk, Monroe County Courthouse, Paris, Missouri.

Stephen Scobee Estate Records, Box 43. Probate Court Office, Monroe County Courthouse, Paris, Missouri,

Tanzey, Mrs. Howard, Paris, Missouri. Personal interview, August 20, 1978. Mrs. Tanzey was an occupant of the house from 1929 to 1949 and provided information on the farm during this time.

Utterback, Calvin, RFD Perry, Missouri. Telephone conversation, August 20, 1978. Mr. Utterback is the grandson of Benjamin Utterback.

b. Secondary Sources:

Anonymous. History of Monroe and Shelby Counties, Missouri
(St. Louis: National Historical Co., 1884), page 496.

Hunt, Karen (Platz) and Michael J. O'Brien, "National
Register Nomination Form: Joseph Morton Farmstead."
Nomination prepared in conjunction with the University
of Nebraska, Cannon Reservoir Human Ecology Project, 1977.

Prepared by: Travis C. McDonald
Architectural Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
August 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house in its present form (and it has changed considerably since its original construction), is a one-and-a-half-story structure, with added rooms along the rear contained beneath an extension of the gable roof.
2. Condition of fabric: Structural and exterior fabrics: Fair.

Interior finish: Poor (extensively vandal-
ized).

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 30'3" (three-bay front) by 23'8".
2. Foundations: Limestone slabs, set in low perimeter walls and more recently covered with concrete.
3. Walls: Horizontal weatherboards (4 1/2" exposure), capped with metal corner guards at all corners. The weatherboards are pine, fastened with wire nails. All exterior surfaces including window frames and trim were once painted white.
4. Structural system: Building sills: 8 1/2" x 12", hewn oak; studs: circular-sawn oak 2x4s, 20" on center; corner posts: 7 1/2" x 3 1/2", hewn walnut, knee-braced in both directions; rafters: 2x4s, 24" on center; ceiling joists: 3 1/2" x 6 1/2" hewn oak, 24" on center originally, replaced in southern half of the house with sawn lumber.

5. Porches: The ghosts of the most recent front gabled porch can be seen over the front door. A porch, enclosed on the west side and partially enclosed on the south side by stud framing and siding, is located at the southwest corner of the house. A large, tooled limestone block serves as a front stoop.
6. Chimneys: A square, brick stove chimney is located to the west of the ridge at the northwest corner of the southeast room. It is plain, without corbeling.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance is centered on the east wall of the house. It has plain-board casings, a slip sill, and a plain dripcap. The door has been removed. The only other exterior door, which leads from the kitchen to the southwest porch, also is framed by plain boards.
 - b. Windows: Two windows are positioned symmetrically on the east (front) facade. They are six-over-six double hung windows set in plain frames with plain-board slip sills and dripcaps. Similar windows are located in the first floor of the south and north walls (one in each) and the west wall (two). There is also a window under the gable of the north and south walls.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The house has a moderate-pitched gable roof, which extends an additional 6' over the rooms along the rear. Earlier wood shingles have been covered with asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornices: The front cornice is distinguished by a row of large wood dentils. The raking cornices and the rear horizontal cornice are made of plain boards.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The original double-pen configuration of the house, a common vernacular form, has been altered considerably through a process of expansion and subsequent contraction, leaving a five-room structure with a loft above.
 - a. Cellar: None.
 - b. First floor: The front entrance leads to a small/entry stair-hall, flanked to the south by a bedroom and to the north by the living room. Slightly off center at the rear is the kitchen. Behind the living room is the dining room. A small pantry

is located beneath the stair to the loft and a small closet opens off the living room in its south wall.

A partially enclosed porch is located in the southwest corner of the house.

c. Attic: The attic space is divided into two unequal-sized spaces--a bedroom in the larger south portion and an attic space in the north.

2. Stairways: A single straight-run stair ascends east-to-west from the entry on the first floor into the bedroom in the loft. It is constructed of pine boards.
3. Flooring: The floorboards are 3 1/4" pine, tongue-and-groove boards, laid over the original flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior walls in the house are either gypsum board or plaster, both finished with either paint or patterned wallpaper. The original lath, which can be seen through holes in the exterior walls, is hand-riven oak. Later lath, laid over the more recent stud walls, is sawn white pine. The walls in the loft consist of painted, plain horizontal flushboards; the ceiling is fiberboard. On the first story, ceilings, where they remain, are generally plaster-over lath.
5. Doorways and doors: Interior doors in the house are molded four-panel doors with plain-board frames.
6. Decorative features and trim: 5 1/2" plain pine baseboards line the walls.
7. Mechanical systems: The house has been serviced with electricity, but not plumbing. Heating was by stoves.

D. Description of Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The James Scobee Farm is situated on a gently west-sloping hillside at the edge of a bottom area bounded on the north, south and west by a bow of Middle Fork of the Salt River. To the east lies a heavily wooded knob at the end of a ridge. Across the river to the south, the land rises sharply, forming a broken plateau. The house faces east, parallel to a dirt road running north-south. Within the yard defined by a wire fence is a rock-lined well under a large maple tree to the southeast of the house. To the southwest was an orchard of apple and pear trees. The family garden was in an enclosure of its own, adjoining the house yard to the south. The farm is surrounded by open fields and hardwood forests.

2. Outbuildings: The structures serving the house--the cellar, smokehouse, privy, henhouse and well--are typical, in their placement, of farmsteads in the region, being close to the rear of the house--in this case to the west. The structures serving the farm are, however, atypically in front of the house, a placement necessitated by the terrain. Most of the farm buildings were located across the road to the east, and directly across from the house was a drill-well with a later windmill. Southeast of the well was a transverse crib horse barn, containing a central drive-through space, flanked by horse stalls, with a corncrib in the southeast corner. Northeast of the horse barn was a cattle barn with an attached hog pen. Between the cattle barn and the road was a one-car garage, with a granary attached to the southeast. All of the outbuildings except the cellar have been destroyed.

Prepared by: Clayton B. Fraser
Project Supervisor
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1978

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the St. Louis District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in compliance with Executive Order 11593, as a part of mitigation efforts connected with the construction in the Clarence Cannon Dam and Reservoir Project Area, in portions of Monroe and Ralls County, Missouri. The project was completed under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1978 by Clayton B. Fraser, Project Supervisor; William T. Morgan (University of South Florida) and Travis C. McDonald (University of Virginia), Architectural Historians; Barbara A. Hendricks (University of Texas), Project Foreman; and Student Architects Dwight H. Burns (Texas Tech University), W. Michael Coppa (University of Virginia), Stephen H. Lauf (Temple University), and Michael K. Murdock (University of Texas). The data was edited in August 1979 by J.A. Chewning, Architectural Historian in the HABS Washington office. Photographs were taken by David J. Kaminsky in August 1978 and by William C. Haines between February and May 1979.